

COOS BAY-NORTH BEND WATER BOARD  
P O BOX 539 – 2305 Ocean Boulevard  
Coos Bay, Oregon 97420

Minutes  
Regular Board Meeting

May 15, 2025  
7:00 a.m.

Coos Bay-North Bend Water Board met in open session in the Board Room at the above address, date, and time with Vice-chair Bill Richardson presiding. Other Board members present: Rob Kilmer, Greg Solarz, and Carmen Matthews (virtually). Board Members absent: none. Water Board staff present: Ivan D. Thomas, General Manager; Matt Whitty, Engineering Manager; Jeff Miller, Operations Manager; Aimee Hollis, Customer Relations Manager; Monica Kemper, Finance Director; Micah Demanett, Meter Services Supervisor; and Stacey Parrott, Executive Assistant & HR Specialist; Board Legal Counsel Melissa Cribbins was present; Leah Cogan of GSI Water Solutions, Inc. (virtually); and Kelly Kimball of Brown and Caldwell (virtually) were present. Meredith Childs was present. Media present: None.

Vice-chair Richardson opened the meeting at 7:00 a.m. and led the Board and assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice-chair Richardson asked if there were any corrections or additions to the April 17, 2025, Regular Board meeting minutes. Mr. Solarz moved the minutes be approved as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kilmer and passed unanimously.

Vice-chair Richardson asked if there were any public comments. A member of the community, Meredith Childs expressed concerns regarding water fluoridation. Mr. Childs referenced the Water Board's Consumer Confidence Report, noting that it mentioned added fluoride in the water supply and went on to express a personal preference for non-fluoridated water citing broader concerns over the presence of fluoride, particularly in light of growing public awareness and discourse surrounding "forever chemicals". Recognizing that the decision to fluoridate water is made at higher levels of authority, he wished to have his opposition to the practice formally acknowledged.

Mr. Childs also raised concerns about a meter charge on recent bills, believed to be possibly tied to the new automated meter system. General Manager, Ivan Thomas and Customer Relations Manager, Aimee Hollis clarified the charge is not new but has always been part of the utility's fee structure. The new billing format now itemizes charges for greater transparency, the meter charge in question covers the first 300 cubic feet of water, with additional usage billed separately. The clearer billing format may have caused confusion, but they emphasized no new charges were added. There were no further public comments.

Regarding the proposed amendment to the Professional Services Agreement and scope of work with GSI Water Solutions, Inc. for Fiscal Year 2026, which includes continued support related to water rights and surface water monitoring. General Manager Ivan Thomas explained that the utility has maintained an annual contract with GSI to provide critical water rights consultation and technical assistance, particularly related to the surface water monitoring plan for the Dunes area. The proposed scope of work is scheduled to take effect beginning July 1, 2025.

Leah Cogan of GSI Water Solutions presented the scope of work and reviewed highlights of the firm's accomplishments during the current fiscal year. Ms. Cogan began by summarizing key milestones completed by GSI, including the submission of the Dunes Surface Water Monitoring Plan annual report to the U.S. Forest Service. She noted that the report was completed and submitted on time.

GSI also provided ongoing support for the Upper Pony Creek water rights, securing an addendum to the extension of time for completing that permit, now extended through October 1, 2030. Additionally, GSI submitted an addendum for the claim of beneficial use related to the municipal permit for the dunal wellfield, identified as Permit G-10132.

Further activities included updating water use reports to the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD), outlining a strategy for the hydroelectric permit, and initiating work toward the associated claim of beneficial use for that permit. Ms. Cogan also described a meeting held with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to address the long-standing delays in assigning fish persistence conditions to certain permits. These permits are of high importance to the Water Board, and some have been pending for over a decade.

A major deliverable for the current fiscal year was the completion and submission of the Water Management and Conservation Plan to OWRD. This included a Green Light Water Request, which ensures that the utility retains access to adequate water supplies for the next twenty years.

Looking ahead to FY 2026, Ms. Cogan outlined a slightly reduced scope of work, as the major deliverable for the prior year, the conservation plan, has already been completed. Work will continue with ongoing monitoring and reporting for the Dunes Surface Water Monitoring Plan, general water rights support, and monthly data management. A checkpoint progress report is due for the industrial water right in the Dunes to document development activity and compliance.

GSI will also continue facilitating other claims of beneficial use and permit extensions, particularly those involving fish persistence conditions. Additionally, the firm plans to develop a scope for a secondary water supply study, focusing on strategies to protect the Tenmile Creek water rights. This includes potential conjunctive management approaches such as using Tenmile Creek as a source for aquifer storage and recovery at the Dunal wellfield. Support will also be provided to respond to any follow-up inquiries from OWRD regarding the submitted conservation plan.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Kilmer moved to approve the General Manager to enter into the amended professional services agreement with GSI Water Solutions, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$47,170 for dunal aquifer and water rights consulting services for fiscal year 2026. The motion was seconded by Mr. Solarz and passed unanimously.

Regarding the purchasing process for Pony Creek Water Treatment Plant SCADA hardware and software selection, Mr. Thomas summarized that over the past several years, the Water Board has developed a SCADA Master Plan to address the aging and increasingly unreliable SCADA infrastructure currently in use at the plant. The proposed purchasing process pertains to the major hardware and software components necessary for system modernization, which is critical to ensuring efficient daily operation and long-term performance of the plant.

Mr. Thomas introduced Kelly Kimball from Brown and Caldwell, the consulting firm assisting with the SCADA upgrade. Mr. Kimball remotely presented the technical findings and explained the selection process used for hardware and software platforms. He went on to explain that the control system upgrade involves two main elements:

- Hardware – including programmable logic controllers (PLCs) that interface with Field instrumentation such as pumps, valves, motors, and filters
- Software – which operates on top of the hardware, providing control functionality and visual data to operations staff and managers

For the hardware selection process, Brown and Caldwell facilitated three peer utility site visits with Water Board staff to evaluate real-world implementations. Visits were conducted at the City of Grants Pass; City of Lake Oswego; and Eugene Water & Electric Board (EWEB). Each facility was selected for its comparable size and the opportunity to evaluate different hardware/software combinations. Feedback was gathered from these utilities regarding the strengths and limitations of the systems they were using. Based on the site visits and detailed desktop evaluation of vendors, three primary hardware manufacturers were considered: Siemens (Germany); Schneider Electric (France); and Rockwell Automation (USA). While all three met the necessary technical requirements, Rockwell was identified as the most advantageous due to its strong local presence, superior customer support, and positive feedback from nearby utilities, including the Coos Bay Wastewater Division, which already uses Rockwell hardware.

The process for software selection will follow a different methodology, given the importance of functionality and user interface in evaluating software platforms. Rather than pre-selecting a vendor, Water Board staff will work with Brown and Caldwell and legal counsel and plan to release a formal Request for Proposals (RFP). The RFP will be open and competitive, encouraging a broad range of submissions. The site visits already provided some exposure to several viable software platforms, including FactoryTalk; Wonderware; and Ignition. Additional vendors may also submit proposals, and a robust pool of responses is anticipated.

After a brief discussion and there being no objections, Mr. Kilmer moved to authorize the General Manager to utilize the Sole Source Procurement rules under Section 4.7 of the Water Board's Administrative Regulations and Purchasing Guidelines for SCADA Hardware selection; and to utilize the RFP process under Section 8.2 ("any method authorized by State Code or Water Board Resolution") of the Water Board's Administrative Regulations and Purchasing Guidelines for SCADA Software selection. The motion was seconded by Mr. Matthews and passed unanimously.

Regarding the proposed scope of work and contract for Fiscal Year 2026 with the Coos Watershed Association to provide environmental monitoring services, Mr. Thomas shared that Water Board has historically contracted with Coos Watershed Association (CWA) for its environmental monitoring needs on many different projects and requirements. The Water Board's fiscal year 2026 budget includes an exclusive scope of work with Coos Watershed for environmental and regulatory monitoring requirements. The scope of work includes continued streamflow gauging to maintain water rights for Tenmile Creek, required vegetation and photo monitoring at Matson Creek, fish sampling for Matson Creek, and completion of the 2025 fisheries management report. These results and reports must be submitted promptly to the associated regulatory authority (ODFW) within the following year. The scope of work,

including a ten percent contingency, totals \$55,848. This amount is included in the Water Board's fiscal year 2026 budget.

There being no objections, Mr. Solarz moved to approve the General Manager to enter into the FY2026 contract with Coos Watershed Association for the proposed environmental monitoring and reporting in an amount not to exceed \$55,848. The motion was seconded by Mr. Matthews and passed unanimously.

Regarding the proposed debt payoff of Business Oregon loan for the Bay Crossing Water Pipeline, Finance Director Monica Kemper relayed that this loan was for a transmission pipeline project that was completed in July of 2005, where a large diameter pipe was installed underneath Coos Bay from the Hollering Point in Empire to the North Spit. The loan, jointly held by the City of Coos Bay and the City of North Bend, is scheduled to mature in 2029. Current annual debt service on the loan is relatively modest, with annual payments totaling approximately \$8,600. Ms. Kemper noted that with preparations underway to pursue new financing for upcoming infrastructure projects, it would be fiscally prudent to eliminate this remaining loan balance. Doing so would place the utility in a stronger financial position and enhance its credit profile ahead of seeking new debt issuance. The payoff amount would be approximately \$37,318 to each city, as of the next accounts payable cycle. Minor adjustments may occur based on interest accruals and processing timing, but the estimate is expected to be accurate within a narrow margin.

The Board members expressed general support for the idea of paying off debt early, particularly when managed within current financial capacity. A motion was made by Mr. Kilmer to authorize the early payoff of the Bay Crossing Water Pipeline loan to the City of Coos Bay and the City of North Bend to retire the Business Oregon Bay Crossing Water Pipeline loan. The motion was seconded by Mr. Matthews and passed unanimously.

Regarding the proposed Springbrook Software annual maintenance invoice, Finance Director Monica Kemper shared that the Water Board started their relationship with Springbrook in 1992 and is utilized by the utility for a wide range of financial operations. It was noted that there was a transition to an online subscription model last fiscal year, due to the shift to a cloud-based platform. The invoice for the upcoming fiscal year totals \$67,905.42. This includes 8 different modules, all of which make our billing process, payment receipting, payroll processing and recording of financial activity efficient. This is a 6.14% increase from last fiscal year's invoice, which is considered reasonable and consistent with industry norms. Two key components of the service, Civic Pay Online and IVR product pricing remain unchanged.

To assess the appropriateness of the increase, a comparison was completed against the most recent Consumer Price Index (CPI) for IT and software services as of March 31, which indicated an increase of approximately 6.82%. Given this benchmark, the proposed Springbrook subscription fee is considered in line with prevailing market conditions.

There being no objections, Mr. Solarz moved to approve the Springbrook Annual Subscription invoice of \$67,905.42. The motion was seconded by Mr. Matthews and passed unanimously.

Regarding the purchase of water meters and Automated Meter Reading units from Consolidated Supply Company, Meter Services Supervisor Micah Demanett

recapped that this purchase supports the continued implementation of the Water Board's AMR upgrade program and is strategically timed to take advantage of favorable pricing under the existing contract, which is now in its final month.

This specific purchase includes water meters for billing Cycles 5 and 7, which were selected to allow alternating between AMR and manual readings on remaining routes. This approach helps manage workloads during the transition. The purchase includes: 1,132 meters for Cycle 5 and 1,311 meters for Cycle 7, totaling 2,443 AMR meters.

Due to recent tariff news, it was discovered that the meter manufacturer planned to increase pricing by approximately 5% in mid-May 2025. This price increase was expected to be outside any current contract with utilities. Due to this unexpected price increase of approximately \$26,705, the General Manager moved forward with the order for these water meters on May 9, 2025. The combined cost of the meters and AMR units for both cycles was \$534,103.94.

In response to an inquiry from Mr. Richardson concerning remaining meter installations and funding for this purchase, Mr. Demanett stated that after this installation, only three of the twelve billing cycles (Cycles 4, 5, and 6) will remain to be converted to AMR. Also, the meters from this purchase will be installed by in-house staff, as opposed to some previous cycles which involved third-party contractors. This in-house approach is expected to slow the installation timeline somewhat, but it will still move us substantially closer to full AMR implementation. As for funding, Mr. Thomas clarified that the funds for the purchase will come from a combination of proceeds from the recent timber sale and the Water Board's stagnant reserves, ensuring no additional borrowing was required.

Mr. Kilmer moved to ratify the General Manager's decision to purchase the quoted Mueller water meters and AMR meter interface units from Consolidated Supply Company for \$534,103.94. The motion was seconded by Mr. Matthews and passed unanimously.

Regarding the design and contract preparation for the FY2025 Water Main Replacement Bundle, Engineering Manager Matt Whitty presented three priority water main projects as identified in the current budget. Projects and costs are as follows:

- Harris Avenue – Located in North Empire, approximately four blocks north of Newmark Avenue. This area includes a gravel roadway and a problematic section of aging water main that has experienced repeated issues. This includes approximately 605 feet of six-inch PVC main. Estimated cost \$142,500
- Myrtle Avenue – Situated near North 14th Street in Coos Bay. This includes approximately 1,477 feet of six or eight-inch PVC main. Estimated cost \$433,500
- Lockhart Avenue – Located in downtown Coos Bay's south end, which has been identified as a critical area for replacement and will also serve as a secondary backup supply line in case of disruptions to the main 10-inch line in the vicinity. This project includes approximately 2,350 feet of eight-inch ductile iron main. Estimated cost \$782,900

With design work now ready to begin, the Board is asked to authorize staff to proceed with in-house engineering design, preparation of contract documents, and solicitation of construction bids for the FY2025 water main bundle.

Chair Matthews raised a question regarding coordination with the Cities of Coos Bay and North Bend, inquiring whether the cities are notified in advance of such projects so they may consider complementary improvements such as street paving, sidewalks, or bike lanes, while the roadway is already disturbed. Mr. Whitty confirmed that while meetings with the cities are held periodically to compare project plans, coordination tends to occur on a semi-annual rather than quarterly basis. It was noted that none of the three current projects conflict with or overlap any planned road improvements by the cities at this time. Permits will be obtained as required before construction, and the anticipated construction start is still nearly a year out, allowing for further coordination if needed. Chair Matthews requested that involving the cities earlier in the process, potentially during budget planning, could provide more opportunities for alignment and community benefit. The importance of improving coordination and alignment was acknowledged, especially for significant projects.

Following the discussion, Mr. Solarz moved to authorize staff to prepare design and bidding documents and solicit bids for the 2025 Water Main Bundle. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kilmer and passed unanimously.

Regarding the proposal to enter into Professional Services Agreements with Dyer Partnership Engineering and RH2 Engineering for consulting services for Wisconsin pump station replacement and upgrades, Engineering Manager Matt Whitty presented a proposal for the final design and construction phases for the project. The Wisconsin pump station is a critical part of the district's water infrastructure, transferring approximately one-third of all processed water to the Charleston area. Due to the station's aging components and increased demands on the system, upgrades are necessary to improve reliability and capacity, specifically by upsizing the pumps to increase flow rates. Through several years of strategic financial planning and capital allocation, we have accumulated sufficient funding, subject to adoption of the FY2026 budget, in order to complete construction. Task orders for the two engineering firms include:

- RH2 Engineering – originally, the project design included an awning to protect outdoor control panels located on Wisconsin Avenue near the bay. After further evaluation, this was revised to include a CMU (concrete masonry unit) enclosed building, which offers improved weather protection and greater security. RH2's scope includes final design adjustments, provision of stamped construction drawings, and associated technical work, for an estimated fee of \$39,267.
- Dyer Partnership Engineering – handle construction-phase services including preparation of front-end bidding documents, bidding assistance, construction management, inspection, and final closeout activities. Dyer, a local firm, was selected to provide these services in lieu of RH2 due to their geographic proximity and capacity for on-site involvement. The total estimated cost for Dyer Partnership services is \$112,000.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Kilmer moved to authorize the General Manager to enter into a professional services agreement with Dyer Partnership and RH2 Engineering at an estimated cost of \$112,00 and \$39,267. The motion was seconded by Mr. Solarz and passed unanimously.

Regarding proposed updated job description series for Treatment Plant Operator, Utility Worker, and Crew Leader, General Manager Ivan Thomas presented revisions for these critical positions. All three of these roles require certification from

the State of Oregon and are central to operations in both the treatment and distribution divisions. The proposed updates stem from recommendations made following a recent pay equity and market compensation study conducted by HR Answers. One key finding of the study was the need for greater clarity and structure in the job descriptions, specifically around the progression of responsibilities and qualifications from Level I through Level III within each job classification. The revised descriptions now clearly delineate the certification and experience requirements for each level. The updates are intended to enhance transparency, support professional development, and align with industry best practices.

There being no objections, Mr. Solarz moved to approve the proposed updated job descriptions for the Utility Worker, utility Crew Leader, and Water Treatment Plant Operator series, effective July 1, 2025. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kilmer and passed unanimously.

Regarding the proposed updated job description for Engineering Technician I-Office, Mr. Thomas stated that these revisions are based on recommendations from the recent pay equity and market compensation study. Historically this role supported the engineering operations through manual mapping and an older version of CAD software. However, as the Water Board transitions toward modern Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for mapping and data management, the responsibilities associated with this position have evolved significantly.

The proposed job description updates reflect the increased integration of GIS tasks and the need for technical proficiency with newer mapping systems. The goal is to realign the job duties with the skills currently required, clarify expectations, and bring the position in line with industry standards. HR Answers reviewed the new scope of duties and provided recommendations to refine and modernize the role description accordingly.

Mr. Kilmer moved to approve the proposed updated job descriptions for the Engineering/GIS Technician I - Office, effective July 1, 2025. The motion was seconded by Chair Matthews and passed unanimously.

Regarding the proposed updated job description for Executive Assistant-Human Resources Specialist, Mr. Thomas stated that previously this position's scope was more narrowly focused on administrative support, however over the past year the position has taken on an expanded role in the organization's HR functions. This has prompted a review and revision of the official position description to reflect these new responsibilities.

These revisions are based on recommendations from the recent pay equity and market compensation study conducted by HR Answers and are a necessary and overdue adjustment that more accurately reflects the duties being performed and aligns the role with current and anticipated organizational needs.

Mr. Solarz moved to approve the proposed updated job descriptions for the Executive Assistant-Human Resources Specialist, effective July 1, 2025. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kilmer and passed unanimously.

Regarding the reclassification of Field Customer Service Tech I and II positions and proposed updated job description, Mr. Thomas presented the recommendation to consolidate the current two-tier classification system for Field Customer Service

Representatives (FCSR) into a single position. Historically, the Water Board has maintained two classifications for this role:

- FCSR I - focuses primarily on manual meter reading, with some limited customer interaction.
- FCSR II - tasked with more advanced responsibilities including shutoffs, reactivations, field service duties, and more direct customer engagement.

With the continued implementation of the Automated Meter Reading (AMR) system, the need for manual meter reading has significantly declined. As a result, the distinction between the two positions has become less relevant. The current operational demands favor employees with broader customer service capabilities and technical competencies related to meter maintenance, troubleshooting, and changeouts.

In response, and in alignment with recommendations from the pay equity and market compensation study conducted by HR Answers, we propose eliminating the FCSR I classification and consolidating the series into a single Field Customer Service Representative role. The reclassified position would reflect the responsibilities and compensation level currently associated with the FCSR II designation. Minor updates were made to the job description to reflect the current scope of work, which is now more aligned with the advanced field duties and less reliant on manual meter reading.

There being no objections, Mr. Solarz moved to approve the elimination of the FCSR I classification and authorize the consolidation of the FCSR series into a single classification, adopt proposed updates to FCSR job description, and authorize all three current staff classified as Field Customer Service Representatives at the FCSR II pay level, effective July 1, 2025. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kilmer and passed unanimously.

The Board's next regular meeting was set for Friday, June 20, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.

Updates were given as follows:

- Clearwell Tank Mixer and Tracer Study – Staff provided an update on efforts to improve water quality in the clearwell tank by installing mechanical mixers. Modeling performed by the mixer manufacturer showed that without mixing, water takes approximately five hours to fully circulate, with some stagnation at the bottom of the tank. With mixers, circulation improved and full mixing was achieved in about four hours, eliminating stagnant zones. The primary goal of the project is to reduce water quality degradation, particularly issues like nitrification that occur between treatment and distribution. A tracer study is also planned to validate the modeling and support discussions with the Oregon Health Authority. Although initially expected to be a simple improvement, the project has involved additional regulatory coordination. Staff believe the mixers will significantly enhance water quality and noted this effort aligns with longer-term plans to replace the current clearwell with two future tanks for improved capacity and redundancy.

At 8:08 a.m. Vice-chair Richardson directed they go into executive session for the purpose of discussing records otherwise exempt from disclosure pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(f) and potential litigation pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(h). The Board returned to open session at 8:33 a.m.

There being no other business to come before the Board, Vice-chair Richardson adjourned the meeting at 8:34 a.m.



Approved: \_June 20\_\_\_\_, 2025

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Carmen Matthews, Chair

ATTEST:

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